



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

December 16, 2003

Governor Ehrlich Announces Joint Resolution with EEOC

Will Promote Advancement of People with Disabilities in State Jobs

Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., today announced a joint resolution with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) aimed at boosting employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities in State government. Signed by Governor Ehrlich and EEOC Chair Cari M. Dominguez, the agreement unites the efforts of Maryland and the EEOC in Maryland's recruitment hiring and reasonable accommodations programs to identify best practices for incorporation by other states.

"The strength of Maryland resides in the quality of life of each of its citizens," said Governor Ehrlich. "Higher rates of employment among people with disabilities is a critical achievement necessary to secure our success in this endeavor.

Based on the Ehrlich Administration's affirmation to improve the lives of all Marylanders with disabilities, the EEOC began with Maryland to pioneer a series of federal-state government partnerships to further advance the New Freedom Initiative, President George W. Bush's comprehensive program to fully integrate the nation's 54 million individuals with disabilities into all aspects of American life. Currently, people with disabilities represent 17 percent of Maryland's working-age population.

"Governor Ehrlich is to be commended for his leadership, both in improving job opportunities for Marylanders with disabilities and providing a model for other state governments," said Chair Dominguez. "Serious employment obstacles to people with disabilities extend to every corner of our nation, and so must the commitment to implement solutions."

The resolution, signed December 15, 2003, determined that the EEOC and Maryland will work together to identify the most effective practices for individuals with disabilities who are currently State employees or applying for State employment, eliminate barriers that may be discovered, and acknowledge practices from which other State employers may benefit.